PFAS ACTIVITIES – CROSS-STATE MIGRATION IN GEORGIA AND ALABAMA

TALKING POINTS

- Since the issuance of the PFOA/PFOS Health Advisory (HA), the EPA has remained closely engaged with the Alabama Department of Environmental Management (ADEM) and the Alabama Department of Public Health (ADPH) to discuss drinking water system monitoring results, assist with public notification efforts, and to identify options for reducing PFAS levels in finished water.
- The EPA has also coordinated closely with ADEM and the Georgia Environmental Protection Department (GA EPD) on providing analytical support and sampling of rivers and lakes that are the sources for the drinking water systems that exceeded the HA levels.
- The EPA is currently planning an additional study, in the Spring and Summer of 2019, with a more targeted approach to evaluating legacy vs. ongoing PFAS contamination of relevant water bodies. After this study is completed, the EPA plans to meet with state officials to discuss solutions to reduce PFAS contamination.

BACKGROUND

- Two Public Water Systems (PWS) in Alabama, the City of Gadsden and the City of Centre, have detected levels of PFOA and PFOS that exceed EPA's Health Advisory (HA) level of 70 ppt.
- Past monitoring in relevant watersheds has identified the Conasauga River, near Dalton, Georgia, as a contributor to the PFOA and PFOS levels in the watershed.
- Dalton Utilities land applies wastewater from their treatment plant and a county landfill, which includes discharges from carpet/textile manufacturers, to a 10,000-acre sprayfield that is located on Looper's Bend. The Loopers Bend land application site (LAS) is adjacent to the Conasauga River which flows into the Coosa River and Lake Weiss Lake, the raw water sources for the Gadsden and Center PWSs.
- The EPA has partnered with multiple stakeholders to collect and analyze PFAS contamination upstream, downstream and onsite of the Loopers Bend LAS in Dalton, GA. EPA's Region 4 laboratory and Office of Research and Development have led several sampling investigations which have identified and analyzed cross-state PFAS migration from Georgia and Alabama.
- The EPA worked with the GA EPD and Dalton Utilities to connect GA residents, with private well PFAS levels exceeding the PFOA and PFOS Health Advisory, to municipal water supply.
- Since 2016, the impacted Alabama drinking water systems have monitored their water on a biweekly basis and periodically noted exceedances of the HA.

- Both Alabama water systems have pending lawsuits against multiple Georgia businesses, including carpet manufacturers, known to use PFAS compounds alleging contribution to the downstream contamination near the intakes of their systems.
- GA EPD raised questions about other potential PFAS sources on the Chattooga River, which also flows independently into Weiss Lake. EPA conducted a study in April, 2018 that indicated, under high-flow conditions, minimal levels of PFAS contribution from the Chattooga River to Lake Weiss.
- On August 7, 2018, ADEM transmitted a second letter to GA EPD, requesting state-sampling data related to PFAS released or present in the Coosa and Chattooga rivers. Additionally, ADEM asked GA EPD for information on actions taken or planned to address the sources in Georgia.
    - ADEM currently requires PFAS sampling in their NPDES permits and has consistently shared all PFAS Results with EPA and the State.
    - GA EPD does not require PFAS monitoring in discharge permits. The EPA has discussed NPDES permitting options for Dalton Utilities, but GA EPD has not pursued any permitting action to date.
- The EPA continues to support collection and sharing of data and plans an additional study in 2019 to help determine relative contributions of legacy vs. current PFAS releases around Loopers Bend.
- Gadsden Waterworks & Sewer Board completed their GAC treatment installation in December 2018. Their current treatment has been effective in reducing combined levels of PFOA and PFOS in finished water, which were previously as high as 120 ppt down to 30ppt.
- Centre Water & Sewer System will complete their GAC treatment installation by July 2020. Similar to the Gadsden water system, Centre has had combined levels of PFOA and PFOS as high as 130 ppt; however, the most recent analytical results show levels near 60 ppt (February 2019).

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